

MUNDO OBRERO

**RICHARDSON
Y OBAMA**

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*Repression,
resistance*



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Refuse to scab at American Axle Rehired workers join picket lines

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Detroit

During the fifth week of the American Axle strike, company President Dick Dauch escalated tensions in an attempt to crush the strike. But striking workers and their allies are courageously fighting back as the strike enters its sixth week.

About 3,600 workers at five American Axle plants in Michigan and New York have been on strike since Feb. 26, based on an unfair labor practice. The UAW says the company refuses to open its books. American Axle wants to cut the workers' pay in half, eliminate pensions and gut benefits—despite the fact that the company made \$37 million in profits in 2007. Dauch himself made \$10.2 million last year while the workers make on average about \$45,000-\$50,000 before taxes.

A total of 30 GM factories, including a transmission plant in Ohio that closed March 31, have been fully or partly shut down, with more than 40,000 workers now on layoff. About 80 percent of American Axle's products are sold to GM.

If American Axle gets its way it will be a mighty blow to the working class generally. This strike is a class-wide battle which all workers and their allies have a stake in.

In the March 27 edition of the Detroit Free Press, Dauch said: "We have the flexibility to source all of our business to other locations around the world, and we have the right to do so. ... If we cannot compete for new contracts in the U.S., there will be no work in the original plants."

American Axle then announced that it was recalling more than 400 laid-off workers at the five plants on strike in Detroit, Hamtramck and Three Rivers, Mich., as well as in Tonawanda and Cheektowaga, N.Y. These workers were told to report for work March 30.

In a blatant attempt to demoralize, bludgeon and starve the workers into submission, American Axle was forcing these workers to risk losing unemployment benefits. But it failed miserably as the workers organized to fight back.

'Union staying strong' despite scab ads

On March 30, the workers, with union reps, walked in, reported for work and walked right back out to the picket lines, where most had been anyway since the strike began. They were welcomed to the multinational picket lines with rousing chants and applause, then went to register for their \$200-a-week strike benefits at their respective union halls.

"This is solidarity and it's empowering. It's important that the union stay strong," declared Mario Bynum, a UAW Local 262 member, while joining the picket lines at the Hamtramck plant. He had just marched from his union hall with the local's leadership and about 60 laid-off workers. A contingent from Local 235 included about 70 laid-off workers and the local's leadership.

"This is touching. All of our union sisters and brothers working together," said Harry Jemkort of Local 262 as he joined the picket line.

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Left to right:
Amina Baraka,
Iyaluua Ferguson,
Suzanne Ross,
Larry Holmes,
Amiri Baraka &
Herman Ferguson
in Harlem, N.Y.,
March 28.

WW PHOTO:
ANNE PRUDEN

Ruling of 3rd Circuit Court

Another 'Mumia exception'

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

A ruling by the three-judge panel of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals rejecting Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeals has left supporters outraged and convinced that, for this internationally known political prisoner, there is no chance for a "fair trial" within the U.S. injustice system.

On March 27, the long-awaited decision by the Third Circuit Court judges followed a pattern

that's become all too obvious in Abu-Jamal's hearings before Pennsylvania courts: ignore their own legal precedents and make exceptions to the rules when it comes to decisions regarding Mumia.

This practice of creating new court standards applied only to Abu-Jamal has been dubbed "the Mumia exception" and was criticized in an Amnesty International report of the Abu-Jamal case controversy released in 2001.

The three-judge panel consisting

of Reagan appointees Chief Judge Anthony Scirica and Judge Robert Cowan, and Judge Thomas Ambro, a Clinton appointee, refused to grant Abu-Jamal a new hearing or new trial on three compelling issues: prosecutors use of racism to exclude African Americans from the jury during Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial; the prosecutor making improper comments to that 1982 jury at the trial's end; and pro-prosecution bias by Judge Albert Sabo, who

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NEW YORK CITY

Homelessness is up

By G. Dunkel

The number of homeless people in New York City rose by nearly 6 percent in 2007, according to a March 27 report by the Coalition for the Homeless. The figures from the Department of Homeless Services indicate that the increase in homelessness for families will continue in 2008.

In the city's Fiscal Year 2007, which runs from July 2006 to June 2007, 102,187 different New Yorkers slept in homeless shelters—5.8 percent more than in FY 2006 and a 23.4 percent increase since FY 2002.

The last residence of a majority of the people in the shelter system was northern Manhattan, central Brooklyn or the Bronx, areas of New York City which are predominantly African-American or Latin@.

At the same time that the use of homeless shelters was increasing significantly, the homeless living on the streets declined. The city administration under billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg has been effective in using social-worker outreach, backed up by coercion and publicity campaigns, to get the homeless out of publicly visible areas.

New York has a different housing market than most of the U.S.; far more people—about two-thirds of all households—rent rather than buy. Since it has a large majority of all the regulated rental units in the country, and a large public housing stock so desirable that it had a waiting

Bailout people before bankers

► **THE MORTGAGE BANKERS ASSOCIATION (MBA)**—the biggest national lobby of all the banks, including the criminal predatory lenders that are busy evicting your neighbors, relatives, friends and maybe you from your home—is holding its annual policy conference in Washington D.C., on April 16 & 17. Their main goal is to make sure that **bankers continue to get bailed out while families get tossed out!**

► **LOSING OUR HOMES: A NATIONAL EMERGENCY; *And it's getting worse***. One in every 4 subprime mortgage victims are either in or near foreclosure. Soon, almost 10% of the homes of working families across the country could be in foreclosure. For these families, this isn't a recession—it's a depression and **a national emergency that calls for emergency measures.**

► **A MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES & EVICTIONS► *politicians have the authority to do it.*** Many may not realize that Governors, State Legislatures, the President and Congress (as well as the department of Housing and Urban Development) have the statutory authority to declare a moratorium on home foreclosures and evictions during a time of either natural or economic emergency disaster (it's important to include evictions because record numbers of renters or also losing their apartments).

► **THIS FIGHT IS FOR ALL OF US ►come to D.C. on April 16 ►bring a bus, van, or a carload of people** Whether you are directly affected by the home foreclosure epidemic, or just outraged that the government seems ready to give **hundreds of billions of dollars** to rescue banks from failing while doing nothing for those who are losing their homes, join people from around the country in Washington, D.C. on April 16 to shake up the bankers and wake up the government. Let's not wait until we're all homeless.

► **UNITE AND ORGANIZE = SURVIVAL** Whether it's rising gas and food prices ►the lack of health care ►losing our jobs ►having our wages cut ►sinking further into credit card, student loan, or medical debt ►budget cuts ►the destruction of public housing ►or ending this war that is costing lives and almost a half a billion dollars a day ►**surviving hard times is going require that we stick together and organize.**

JOIN US.

Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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list, working people formerly had stable housing costs. It was common for a family to rent the same apartment for decades.

But landlords have been able to significantly weaken rent-regulation protections and right-wing politicians, following the wishes of the real estate interests, have shifted major funding out of public housing in New York City.

The same unbridled capitalist greed that has produced foreclosures, along with subprime mortgages and predatory lending practices in other areas of the U.S., has obviously had an impact on evictions in New York City. People who are paying over 50 percent of their monthly income on rent have a precarious hold on their housing and even a slight reduction in their income brings major difficulties in meeting their obligations.

About 50 percent of the homeless families in shelters have either a formal or informal eviction in their recent history, according to a Vera Institute study.

Homelessness is a nationwide problem; according to some estimates, 750,000 people are homeless in the whole country, with Los Angeles County having 73,000 people living on the street. Service providers in St. Petersburg, Fla.; Seattle; Baltimore; and the District of Columbia told the Inter Press Service March 8 that they had noticed a sharp increase in homelessness. But hard figures and even trends are hard to come by. □



**Demonstrate
Against the
MORTGAGE
BANKERS\$
A\$\$OCIATION
ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE**

**WED • APRIL 16
WASHINGTON D.C.**

3 pm WASHINGTON COURT HOTEL
525 New Jersey Ave. NW (Between E & F St., near Union Sta.)

Demand a Moratorium on Foreclosures & Evictions Now!

Contact: The Ad Hoc Nat'l Network to Stop Foreclosures & Evictions
A fast growing network of activists organizing in every region of the country.
www.StopForeclosuresandEvictions.org
For travel from NYC to DC, call 212-633-6646



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Ruling of the 3rd circuit court

Another ‘Mumia exception’

Continued from page 1

ruled over both the 1982 trial and a 1995 appeals hearing.

However, the appeals court said that Abu-Jamal, who has been on death row in Pennsylvania for almost twenty-six years, deserves a new sentencing hearing because of flawed jury instructions, thereby upholding a December 2001 ruling to this effect by Federal District Judge William Yohn.

“The court did order a new jury trial on the issue of whether he should be on death row,” attorney Robert Bryan told Democracy Now. “In effect, what they did ... was throw out the death penalty. So that’s the good part of the decision. On the negative side ... the court ruled against granting a new trial on the issue of guilt or innocence.” Bryan stated that he will now ask the entire Third Circuit Court to review the issues. Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham has indicated that she will continue to seek the death penalty for Abu-Jamal.

At a March 31 press conference outside the Federal Court building in Philadelphia, Abu-Jamal’s supporters denounced the court’s decision and vowed to up the ante in their fight to free Mumia. Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal noted: “The power of the people has to be unleashed because what the court did is wrong!”

“This is not the first precedent the courts have broken that’s gone against Mumia, but this is one that’s going to resonate around the world,” said Africa, who announced plans for a national protest in Philadelphia on Saturday, April 19.

Africa said: “Last week’s court decision was not a victory. While we obviously prefer to have Mumia alive, instead of executed, life in prison without parole is an unacceptable sentence for an innocent man.”

Journalist Linn Washington Jr., who has followed Abu-Jamal’s case since 1981, noted that there has been instance after instance where the courts ignored compelling evidence that justifies a new trial for Mumia. “Precedent in American law means courts following previous court rulings when determining specific legal issues. Precedent is the bedrock of American law which requires courts to follow precedent unless significant evidence and/or compelling rationales necessitate changing precedent,” Washington stated. “This Third Circuit ruling changes precedent by applying legal procedures in a highly questionable manner to dismiss compelling evidence of injustice against Abu-Jamal.”

“What is different about this appellate court ruling,” Washington concluded, “is that for the first time there has been dissent from a judge involved,” referring to Judge Thomas Ambro’s strong exception to his colleagues regarding their decision on Abu-Jamal’s appeal concerning racism in the jury selection process.

Judges Cowan and Scirica rejected Abu-Jamal’s claim of racial bias claiming his protest of jury rejection wasn’t timely and he did not provide the court with evidence on the racial make-up of the jury pool from which jurors in his 1982 trial were selected. They also ignored evidence that a systematic practice of excluding African Americans from Philadelphia juries existed throughout the 1970s and 1980s and was acknowledged by a former Philadelphia prosecutor.

Basis of dissent

In his 41-page dissent, Judge Ambro challenged the blatant double standard in the court’s rejection of the “Batson” claim

regarding racist jury selection. In *Batson v. Kentucky* in 1986 the Supreme Court established that excluding even one single person from a jury because of their race violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. As recently as March 19, the Supreme Court affirmed that position in a 7 to 2 ruling in another death penalty case, *Snyder v. Louisiana*.

Ambro made several references to precedents set by the Third Circuit Court that were ignored in the panel’s ruling. “We have repeatedly said that a defendant can make out a prima facie case for jury selection discrimination by showing that the prosecution struck a single juror because of race ... in fact in *United States v. Clemons*, we explained, ‘striking a single black juror could constitute a prima facie case even when blacks ultimately sit in the panel and even when valid reasons exist for striking other blacks.’

“Yet the majority focuses on the absence of information about the racial composition and the total number of the venire (jury pool) ... claiming the exclusion rate is necessary to access whether an inference of discrimination can be discerned in Abu-Jamal’s case. Such a focus is contrary to the non-discrimination principle underpinning *Batson*, and it conflicts with our Court’s precedents, in which we have held that there is no ‘magic number or percentage necessary’ to trigger a *Batson* inquiry. ...

“I see no reason why we should not afford Abu-Jamal the courtesy of our precedents.” Ambro further stated, “Why we pick this case to depart from that reasoning I do not know.” This is the first time any judge has publicly acknowledged “the Mumia exception.”

The panel’s majority claims that Abu-Jamal forfeited his *Batson* claim by failing to make a timely objection to improper procedures by prosecutors. It is blatantly absurd, however, to hold Abu-Jamal’s original lawyer responsible for not strictly following a procedure in 1982 that wasn’t established until 1986.

Equally absurd was the majority’s decision to deny an evidentiary hearing to Abu-Jamal because he did not provide them with evidence regarding the jury pool’s ethnic composition, evidence that would normally be brought forward in just such a hearing.

The panel’s findings on Abu-Jamal’s other appeals were equally outrageous. The judges unanimously rejected Abu-Jamal’s claim that Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over both his 1982 trial and 1995 Post Conviction Relief Act hearing, had been prejudicial against him. Sabo’s biased antics during that 1995 proceeding were so outrageous that hundreds of newspapers around the country, including the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, criticized his pro-prosecution stance.

The panel also unanimously rejected the claim that Prosecutor Joseph McGill had diminished the jury’s sense of responsibility during the conviction phase of the trial by telling them their decision would not be final as there would be “appeal after appeal.”

The judges, while not denying McGill’s statement may have had an impact, stated that court precedent only used such evidence to overturn death sentences, not convictions, further denying Abu-Jamal relief he should have received if these federal appeals judges fairly followed their own established law.

More information on this case, including Pam Africa’s April 19th statement, the full text of the March 27 court ruling and protest actions for Mumia can be found at www.millions4mumia.org. □

Emergency protests:

‘Free Mumia!’

By Monica Moorehead

Emergency protests took place in a number of cities March 28, the day after a 2 to 1 court ruling March 27 made by the 3rd Circuit of Appeals that upheld the guilty verdict in the case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and called for a resentencing hearing due to flawed jury instructions in the original trial.

In **New York**, hundreds of Mumia supporters marched following a rally from the Harlem State Office Building to St. Mary’s Church for an organizing meeting that called for an April 19 mobilization in Philadelphia to demand freedom for Mumia. Delegations from the MOVE organization, December 12 Movement, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Harlem Tenants Council, Latinos for Mumia, International Action Center, FIST, ANSWER, New Black Panther Party, SDS and others came out in support of the protest called by the New York Free Mumia Coalition.

In **San Francisco**, activists rallied outside the federal courthouse downtown to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Kiilu Nyasha, a longtime activist in support of U.S. political prisoners, compared the injustice against Mumia with the local case of the San Francisco 8, a group of former Black Panther Party members unfairly rounded up and charged with conspiracy and murder of a San Francisco policeman. Nyasha noted that two of the



WW PHOTO: BETSEY PIETTE
Mumia supporter at Philadelphia press conference, March 31.

SF8, Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaquin, like Mumia are serving life sentences for their participation in the Black liberation movement. The protest was organized by the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Members of the **San Diego** Mumia Coalition gathered at a busy central city intersection at Friday evening rush hour to draw community attention to the 3rd Circuit Court’s decision and to Mumia’s continuing struggle for justice.

In **Houston**, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement called an emergency protest in front of Harris County Courthouse. Harris County has sent more people to death row than any county in the U.S. and has executed more than 100 people. Activists from National Black United Front, the Harris County Green Party and the Anarchist Black Cross organized and spoke at a rally.

Contributors to this article are Judy Greenspan, Bob McCubbin, Anne Pruden and Gloria Rubac. □

Rev. Wright, Obama

& freedom of speech

By Chris Silvera
Secretary-Treasurer, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 808

Dear America:

Why are we judging Barack Obama by the words of another man?

Rev. Jeremiah Wright served his country honorably as a U.S. Marine. As such, he has earned full rights under the Constitution of these United States of America. One of those rights is freedom of speech. This freedom of speech does not require consent or agreement from those being spoken to.

America must understand the point of view of a formerly enslaved and now oppressed people. When white men wrote the words to the Constitution that “all men are created equal,” they saw fit not to include people of African descent who remained in enslavement. As a people who have felt the wrath of American Democracy for more than four hundred years, forgive us as a people.

After only forty years of freedom forgive us for sometimes thinking and saying what is perceived as “crazy” things, yet all the while dying in every war ever fought for any and everything that resulted from Jamestown to Plymouth Rock, including the army of the Confederate States of America through today’s war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Though Crispus Attucks was the first to give his life and many others of African descent fought for Independence and in the War of 1812, in the Battle of 1815, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam and Gulf Wars I and II, we



Chris Silvera

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

are still not fully accepted as truly loyal citizens of our country. We still live in a country that allows a symbol of insurrection and enslavement to continue to fly legally.

Did Senator McCain have to denounce his mother and her words regarding Mormons? Have we analyzed the past ten years of sermons by the pastors of Sens. McCain and Clinton? Have they ever said anything inflammatory or controversial that we should know about? Should those candidates be held accountable for what their pastors have said? Are those candidates even identified with any specific church? Should McCain have to renounce and denounce Pat Robertson or (John) Hagee and other controversial pastors that have endorsed him? If Obama has to renounce Farrakhan and Wright, why is there no call for McCain to renounce and or denounce inflammatory preachers who support him?

What frailty does white America

Continued on page 10

Rehired workers join picket lines

Continued from page 1

On March 29 the company ran ads in newspapers and online soliciting scabs in Detroit, Three Rivers and Buffalo. The ad read in part, “Employment offered to applicants responding to this advertisement will be to fill anticipated attrition replacement openings after negotiations or in place of employees involved in this strike.”

This effort to criminally take the jobs that belong to the strikers, their loved ones and the communities was also met by resistance from the ranks. Early on March 30 picket lines began to swell, as the striking workers and their allies attempted to stop cars from coming into the plant.

Management scabs are now operating various machines and trucks are entering and exiting the plant. A significant amount of management in the auto industry, including at parts suppliers like American Axle, are former UAW members, many still receiving a pension from the union.

During the past few weeks, a couple of trucks have hit strikers upon exiting the

plant but no truckers have been arrested for this crime, although the strikers are often harassed by the cops.

Cars with Ontario plates are coming into the plant as well. Are management scabs now coming in from GM plants elsewhere to engage in production?

What’s the possibility of the UAW transporting the more than 40,000 workers now unemployed due to the bosses’ greed, and tens of thousands more at other workplaces to Detroit, to surround the plant and enact a “nothing moves” policy? What about uniting this mighty force with labor-community-student organizations? Can solidarity committees—built and led by the rank and file—build a coalition to swiftly win the strike?

Solidarity growing internationally

The Coalition for Economic Justice in Buffalo helped organize a solidarity “walk with the strikers” action in Cheektowaga, N.Y., March 29. Machinists at the struck plants outside Buffalo have refused to cross the picket line as well.

The strikers have wide labor-student-community support that grows daily. In Michigan, after the Graduate Employee Organization at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor’s successful walk-out March 25, the union had leftover provisions which they donated to Local 235.

UAW locals and other unions throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe and beyond are passing resolutions and sending provisions to the striking workers. The Socialist Metalworkers Federation of Belgium and the Socialist White Collar Trade Union of the GM Belgium plant in Antwerp sent a solidarity message to the strikers on March 25.

On April 18 a demonstration at Hart Plaza in Detroit, sponsored by the UAW, will build support for the striking workers. For more information: 313-926-5312 or www.uawaam.org.

Send donations and support resolutions to UAW Local 235, 2140 Holbrook Ave., Hamtramck, MI 48212; 313-871-1190; adrianrking@hotmail.com or billalford74@yahoo.com. □

ON THE

UMich grads’ ‘historic’ contract

After nearly five months of contentious negotiations and a one-day strike on March 25, the Graduate Employees’ Organization at the University of Michigan won a three-year contract for graduate student instructors. The threat of a second-day work stoppage pushed the administration back to the table.

“This is a major, major victory for our union,” GEO lead negotiator Colleen Woods told The Michigan Daily. (March 26) “It is a historic contract.” What made it historic is expanded health care coverage for all GSIs regardless of the number of hours they work. GSIs also receive a 6.2 percent raise in the first year of the contract, followed by 3.5 percent raises in the second and third years.

Red Sox players’ support strike

On March 19, right before they were scheduled to fly to Japan for their opening game, Red Sox players went on strike. But not for themselves. They struck for team coaches, trainers, equipment handlers and staff who weren’t scheduled to get paid for the trip. It only took 66 minutes of negotiations with Major League Baseball bosses to turn that around. Now that’s labor solidarity!

Endorse anti-war protest on May Day

On March 19, the 7,000-member New York area postal workers union voted to observe two-minute periods of silence on all three shifts to show their opposition to the Iraq war and occupation on May Day. The resolution was inspired “in solidarity with the actions of our brothers and sisters in the ILWU,” which will shut down all West Coast ports for eight hours

‘All out for May Day’



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

On March 28, the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights held a news conference to announce plans for May Day 2008. The media event took place in front of the ICE detention center in downtown Manhattan and was covered by several news agencies including NY1. The conference made the front page of El Diario newspaper.

The news conference was attended by Silvia Henriquez, executive director of National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, speaking on behalf of the National Coalition for Immigrant Women’s Rights; Joao Brandao, community organizer, Cidadao Global and Brazilian Immigrant Rights Organization; Walter Sinche, Ecuadorian Immigrant Rights Group Pachamama; Marina Diaz, Movimiento de Guatemaltecos en los EE.UU. and Centro Guatemaltecos en los EE.UU.; Yancy Mark Gandionco, Matt Cheirs representatives of NAFCON, National Filipino Concerns; Comrade Shahid, Pakistani USA Freedom Forum; and Teresa Gutierrez of the May 1st Coalition.

Two Minutemen attempted to disrupt the press conference but failed. The May Day rally will take place May 1st at 4p.m. in Union Square. Organizers report that mobilizing efforts are going very well. □

Nat’l Assoc. of Manufacturing Anti-communist union-buster

By Martha Grevatt

American Axle’s CEO Richard Dauch is a board member of the National Association of Manufacturers and was, until recently, its chairman and public face.

NAM brags on its Web site of its “proud history of achievements.” Just what are the “achievements” of this capitalist consortium, founded in 1895 by over 70 industrialists as they were simultaneously entering the imperialist phase of U.S. capitalism? What domestic agenda coincided with their plans to plunder the world?

“The genesis of the NAM’s commitment to sound employee relations policies,” the organization explains, “was the anthracite coal strike of 1902. The following year, the NAM established an internal department to advocate open shop labor policies.”

The strike of 144,000 men and boys in the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania was in response to brutal ten-hour days and wages as low as \$22 a month. Led by the United Mine Workers, the strike won higher wages and shorter hours but after five months failed to achieve union recognition. The open shop (nonunion at that time) prevailed.

By the 1930s the costs of NAM’s favored “employee relations policies” were high. Hundreds of union supporters had been murdered and untold numbers beaten, gassed, arrested and “blacklisted.”

The cost of industrial espionage alone had climbed to \$80 million, with tens of millions more spent on private corporate

stockpiles of weapons and tear gas, not to mention the burden to taxpayers of widespread government repression.

With the cost passed on to consumers by the association’s corporate members, its National Industrial Information Committee “spent more than \$15 million on leaflets, movie shorts, radio speeches, films for schools, reprints of articles by economists, and other public relations efforts,” according to the NAM web site.

NAM provided ready-made “news,” radio programs (“American Family Robinson”), cartoons (“Uncle Abner Says”), and editorials to a media all too willing to conceal the authorship.

Twelve thousand local newspapers received editorials equating unionism with communism and some 2.5 million column inches of this drivel were published. NAM’s “Factual Bulletin” was sent to every paper in the country while its “weekly press service” articles were translated for 2.5 million readers of Italian, German, Hungarian and Polish media.

None of this propaganda could halt the forward march of labor. In 1937 workers engaged in 4,700 strikes, including 477 sit-downs. A follow-up pamphlet, “Join the CIO and help build a Soviet America,” proved equally ineffective, although NAM’s membership soared.

Labor rights under attack

Continuing with its boastful pride, the Web site recounts that “NAM played a leading role in the 1947 enactment, overriding President Harry Truman’s veto, of the Taft-Hartley Act, which served to level

the playing field in labor relations.”

For over 50 years Taft-Hartley has been used to curtail labor’s only real leverage against employers, the right to strike.

There’s more. “A major NAM effort to document the abuses of union power led to the 1959 enactment of the Landrum-Griffin Act,” which tightened controls already in place under Taft-Hartley and gave the secretary of labor extensive powers to interfere with private union affairs.

Unwilling to allow any limits on the reach of Taft-Hartley, “The work of the NAM and its members helped derail union-backed ‘labor law reform’ legislation via a Senate filibuster in 1978.”

NAM’s “achievements” of the 1980s and 1990s include the passage of NAFTA and CAFTA and “successful lawsuits reining in rulemaking abuses at OSHA and EPA.”

Overturning OSHA’s ergonomics standard was, in the vile organization’s own words, “a particularly satisfying victory.”

Currently, NAM is lobbying for the passage of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia’s fascist Uribe regime, with which it has in common a deep hatred of unions.

At the same time, these capitalists are pushing to defeat Senate Bill 2191—which aims to reduce total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions to 63 percent below their 2005 levels by the year 2050—and the EPA’s new ozone standard.

All of these current and historical attacks on labor are documented unashamedly on the NAM Web site, but there is one particularly sordid chapter left out. In 1924 both the House and Senate passed overwhelm-

ingly an amendment to the Constitution giving Congress “the power to limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age.”

Defeating this amendment at the state level became NAM’s primary obsession. Not only was what would have become the 20th Amendment denounced as “Bolshevistic,” the outlandish claim was made that it was “a revolutionary transformation of the traditional relationship and respective function of local and federal government and the primary control of parents over the training and occupation of their children.”

With the help of Roman Catholic clergy the amendment failed in Massachusetts. NAM then turned its eyes on Minnesota. Ally Uriah Briggs of the Minnesota Citizens Alliance insisted that: “Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the boy who has not learned to work before he is eighteen years old increases the idlers and street corner loafers, thieves and other criminals, and goes straight to perdition. ... Which will you have—your children in the Devil’s Workshop or in the Industrial Workshop?”

In 1933 Minnesota finally passed the amendment over employer objections, but by that time NAM had effectively killed any hope of giving constitutional protection to this country’s children.

Low wages, long hours, pollution and child labor—these are the causes to which the National Association of Manufacturers has devoted itself for over a century! In his drive to bust the UAW, the CEO of American Axle is in good company. □

PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

on May Day, and with the San Francisco letter carriers who will act in solidarity with the ILWU. The resolution also urged members to “wear a button, ribbon, badge or some other symbol of protest of the war on May Day.”

On March 24, the San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution in solidarity with the longshore workers and S.F. letter carriers. In addition, the resolution “encourages other unions to follow ILWU’s call for a ‘No Peace/No Work Holiday’ or other labor actions on May Day to express their opposition to the U.S. wars and occupations in the Middle East.”

NYCLAW condemns Israeli attack on Gaza

On March 23, New York City Labor Against War issued a precedent-setting statement of international solidarity. It joined the Congress of South African Trade Unions in denouncing Israel’s recent massacres in Gaza that killed at least 130 Palestinians. It also condemned the AFL-CIO and Change to Win for backing U.S. support for Israel and U.S. Labor Against the War for remaining silent. In addition, the statement included three demands: an end to U.S. military and economic support for Israel, divestment of U.S. business and labor investments in Israel, and withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces from the Middle East.

Student Labor Action Week

Spanning Cesar Chavez’s birthday on March 31 and the April 4 date when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, March 28 through April 4 has been designated Student Labor Action Week. Students on campuses in 29 states are taking a variety of creative actions to demand living wages for all campus employees, university codes of conduct that support workers’ rights both on campus and overseas, development of “green jobs” that support workers in communities and promote a healthy environment, access to higher education for all, and fair wages and working conditions for people who grow food and harvest crops. To learn more about SLAW, visit the Jobs with Justice Web site: www.jwj.org.

Nurses staged strike in the Bay Area

On March 25, more than 4,000 registered nurses at eight Bay Area hospitals began a 10-day strike against Sutter Health. The members of the California Nurses Association are striking over serious problems with patient care, medical redlining and health care for nurses. This is the third time that nurses have struck Sutter Health Facilities. The main reason for the 10-day walkout is the safety risk caused by Sutter’s refusal to schedule RNs to care for patients when nurses are on legally mandated meal and rest breaks. The CNA is also concerned about Sutter’s practice of closing hospitals in medically underserved areas.

This reporter walked the picketline with striking nurses on March 30 in front of Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley. Most nurses are not crossing the picketlines, and some patients also refused to enter the hospital for their appointments. One nurse mentioned that “replacement” nurses are being brought in from as far away as Mississippi and Louisiana to cross the picketlines. What’s ironic is that, following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, CNA sent hundreds of volunteer nurses to help with emergency medical care in those states.

—Judy Greenspan

BOSTON

Solidarity with Colombian labor leader

By Frank Neisser
Boston

A standing room only crowd of workers, students and community activists packed the Painters and Allied Trades District Council 35 union hall in Boston on March 25 to hear Edgar Paez, secretary for international relations of the Colombian SINALTRAINAL (Food Industry Workers Union). The meeting was part of a national tour sponsored by the United Steel Workers and the AFL-CIO and organized by USW Local 8751 (school bus drivers’ union).

Frantz Mendes, Local 8751 president, chaired the rally. He recognized chief stewards and delegations of drivers from all four yards, Steelworkers Staff Rep. Joe Carlson, and Grievance Committee Chair Steve Kirschbaum. Tony Hernandez, Painters union organizer, and a delegation of his fellow workers and apprentices presented brother Paez with the union’s colors, which the whole crowd signed to send home to Bogotá. OFSJC Bishop Filipe Teixeira’s liberation theology invocation helped set the tone of struggle and solidarity.

Maria Ortiz of the Justice for Hector Rivas Committee gave a moving account of the death by carbon monoxide poisoning of her uncle, Hector Rivas, a mechanic, due to willful negligence by First Group, Inc., the giant British-based transportation monopoly that now controls most school and interstate busing in the U.S. This Puerto Rican brother and his union had complained for months about bad air quality in their trucks, and offered a \$40 repair, which the company refused. Jonathan Regis told of the committee’s efforts to obtain justice all the way to the top of the federal OSHA hierarchy, exposing the Bush anti-labor department’s complicity in letting the company off the hook.

Gladys Vega, militant leader of the Chelsea Collaborative and May Day actions for immigrant rights based in the largely Latin@ communities of Chelsea and East Boston, urged everyone to stand up, fight back, say no to authority and not



Left to right: Bishop Felipe Teixeira; Jorge Marin; Edgar Paez; Frantz Mendes; Maria Ortiz and Gladys Vega.

allow injustices against immigrant workers or any other workers to pass without taking action.

Andre Francois, Local 8751 chief steward, connected the fight in Boston against the mayor’s racist attempt to resegregate Boston schools and eliminate union bus drivers with the union’s fight for a fair contract.

Paez saluted the Chicago Haymarket Martyrs, recalling that International Workers Day—May 1st had its birth in the U.S. He also hailed International Women’s Day, also born of the struggle of immigrant working women in the U.S.

Paez detailed the crimes of the multinational corporations against working people and union activists in Colombia, where more than 4,000 unionists have been killed by paramilitaries over the last 20 years, more than the rest of the world combined. Twelve have been killed so far this year.

Edgar explained the U.S. government support for these killings with “Plan Colombia.” Colombia receives more U.S. “aid” dollars than any country in the world except for Israel and Egypt, all of it going to military attacks. He pointed out that there is no justice available in Colombia, making it necessary for his union, with the help of the Steelworkers, to pursue legal action against the multinationals, Coca Cola, Nestle and Chiquita Brands, in a Florida court.

Indian workers protest ‘modern slavery’

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

In a courageous action that made international news on March 6, some 100 guest workers from India walked off their jobs at a Pascagoula, Miss., shipyard, charging they were being treated as modern-day slaves.

Recruited largely from Mumbai (Bombay) in India to work as pipe fitters and welders in Mississippi and Texas, the workers say they were promised “green cards” or permanent residency in the U.S. for themselves and their families as well as decent wages and working conditions.

Instead, after paying \$15,000-\$20,000 to the recruiting companies, they were given 10-month H2B guest worker visas, confined in a labor camp, housed 24 people to a trailer, forced to pay over \$1000 a month for their housing and food, threatened with deportation if they complained, and had their legal documents withheld from them.

Pictures of the striking workers with their signs declaring “I Am A Man” and “Dignity,” evoking the demands of the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike supported by Dr. Martin Luther King some 40 years ago, were printed in newspapers

around the world.

With the support of the New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice, these immigrants very quickly launched “a journey for justice” from New Orleans to Washington, D.C., to further spread their story of mistreatment and deception at the hands of Signal International, a subcontractor for the giant corporation, Northrop Grumman.

This “satyagrah” or truth action began March 18 and took the marchers to several of the cities where historic events in the U.S. civil rights movement took place.

In Jackson, Miss.; Selma, Ala.; Atlanta, Ga.; and Greensboro, N.C., the workers held news conferences with supporters from civil rights, labor and community organizations that expressed their solidarity with these immigrants and condemned the corporations that profit off human trafficking.

Despite the intimidating presence of U.S. immigration agents and other police who kept surveillance on them during their 9-day march, the strikers successfully reached D.C. intent upon meeting with the Indian ambassador, Ronen Sen, and bringing their testimony to the U.S. Congress about the abuses of the H2B guest worker program.

On March 27, the workers crowded into

He described organizing for justice against the multinationals and for workers’ rights through hearings of the Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples. The tribunal will hold its final hearing this July in Bogotá, focusing on the struggles of Indigenous peoples.

He appealed to the audience to come to Colombia to support the final session. He condemned the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, supported by the multinational corporations at the expense of workers in both Colombia and the U.S. Jorge Marin of the MLK Bolivarian Circle of Boston did translation for Paez.

Steve Gillis, vice president of Local 8751, described his participation in the December 2002 Tribunal in Bogotá, which found Coca-Cola guilty of utilizing paramilitary death squads to assassinate and terrorize members of the SINALTRAINAL union. Gillis appealed for participation in the worldwide Coca-Cola boycott.

On March 26, “Team Unity” City Councilors Chuck Turner, Charles Yancey and Sam Yoon hosted a City Hall ceremony, presenting Paez with a resolution of appreciation voted unanimously by the Boston City Council, recognizing his organizing and sacrifice on behalf of human rights and workers’ rights. Paez invited them to be judges in the final hearing and deliberations of the Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples in Bogotá in July. □

the Indian Embassy where for three hours they passionately pressed Ambassador Sen to advocate on their behalf. While Sen offered little in the way of concrete action to correct the inhuman treatment practiced under the cover of this government sanctioned program, the workers once again had reason to be proud of their strong stand for dignity.

During the remainder of their stay in D.C., they plan to hold public rallies and events, as well as meet with members of Congress about legislation being pushed by the Bush administration to expand the guest worker program.

As a result of their determination to prevent any other worker from enduring such treatment, the Department of Justice has opened a human trafficking investigation into Signal’s use of the H2B program and a class-action lawsuit has also been filed against the company.

Previously, other foreign workers brought into the hurricane-ravaged areas of the Gulf Coast to do cleanup and construction, pick crops and work in hotels have similarly charged that they were lied to and abused under the guest worker program.

For more information, go to www.neworleansworkerjustice.org. □

Four generations of women speak on important struggles

Workers World Party and the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group co-sponsored a March 28 forum, "Which way forward for the women's movement?" that commemorated International Working Women's Month in New York City. Ranging in ages from 21 to 82, the speakers included Christina Hilo, Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment (FiRE); Tyneisha Bowens and LeiLani Dowell, FIST and WWP; and Teresa Gutierrez, Monica Moorehead and Deirdre Griswold, WWP secretariat members. Pam Parker, a singer and WWP member in the D.C./Baltimore area, performed three songs. Joyce Kanowitz, WWP member, recited poetry. Go to www.workers.org to listen to the meeting. The following are excerpts from the speakers:

Tyneisha Bowens: Young women, the next generation of the women's movement, are not just taking note of the increasing attacks on our rights as women; we are acting against these attacks. Youth and students are taking up initiatives to create a new women's movement free of segregation and racism, built-in patriarchy and hetero-normativity and the class divide of what calls itself the women's movement today.

We are taking lessons from those that fought before us in creating a multinational sexually diverse women's movement inclusive to the unique needs of women today and based on the elevation of queer women and women of color. We are redefining our sex, genders and sexualities as it is our responsibility to do. We are protecting the right of self-determination for all women in all nations across the world.



Elderly Women — Joyce Kanowitz

What do we think when we see
When we see an elderly woman
Dressed in clothes that have had
Many years of use.
Clothes that can be too loose,
Maybe reminiscent of a
Younger, fuller body.
Clothes that may not be adequate
For the weather.
A bitter expression on her face.
Do we see the inadequate clothing
An indication of a meager income
From Social Security
Now being threatened with Extinction?
Social Security she struggled for valiantly in her youth?
Do we see the bitter face
A message of pain and disappointment
A lifetime struggling to survive
Ending in subsistence?
Or do we see her at all?

January 2008

Christina Hilo: Filipinas first commemorated International Women's Day in 1971 at the onset of the dictatorial rule of Ferdinand Marcos. With the establishment of GABRIELA in 1984, women under the alliance continued the militant tradition of commemoration of IWD from then on, recognizing the contribution of millions of working women's struggles in the past.

Today, Filipino working women carry on the struggle at a time of worsening economic and political crises under the seven-year Macapagal-Arroyo regime—a regime most subservient to U.S. imperialist dictates, most corrupt and tyrannical, and almost equaling the Marcos dictatorship in its fascism. The military's policy of rape and sexual abuse against women in captivity is indeed enraging.

Our 8 March 2008 campaign is the persistence of the historic struggle and victory of the women's movement as our own contribution to the intensifying struggle of the Filipino people. We will unleash a strong mass struggle of women against dire poverty, corruption and the tyranny of the Arroyo regime.

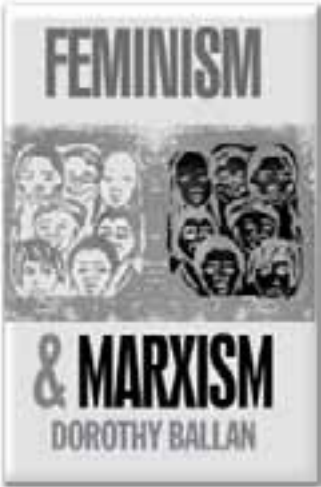


Teresa Gutierrez: We have so many sheroes to look at. In the immigrant struggle comes to mind the case of sister Elvira Arellano, who is one example of many people, many workers, immigrant workers, who are having to spend 1,000 percent of their energy surviving and going to work, taking care of their families, but because of the repression, and because of the exploitation, are thrust into the political struggle and into the movement. It is inspiring to see someone like Elvira or Flor [Crisóstomo], or the mother of Amadou Diallo [Kadiatou Diallo], also as examples of women fighting back in terms of immigration and the horrific attacks; someone like Elvira is one of the many examples of the potential that exists in the U.S. right now to organize and to elevate the class struggle. So Elvira, Flor and the mother of Amadou Diallo are all examples of what lies there in the future for us.

First written in 1971, and reprinted twice since then, this booklet gives a Marxist analysis of the role of women through history.

- Shows that in primitive society—the matriarchy—men and women worked together as equals.
- Traces the roots of women's oppression to the development of wealth in the form of private property, slavery, and class oppression.
- Supports the struggle for social and political rights for women as an essential part of the class struggle.

Chapters include: the woman in history; love, marriage and monogamy; two lines on women's liberation; the Bolsheviks and the sexual revolution.



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LeiLani Dowell: As the Party, we would never compare the various levels of oppression that different groups face—people of color vs. women or LGBT people, for example.

However, we do pay particular attention to the intersection of oppression, how women of color face a double oppression; how lesbians of color face an even greater oppression.

The leadership of the broader women's movement, which has historically been seen as majority white, has not always been correct in its understanding of the intersection of oppressions and its support of those facing the most attacks. For instance, some mainstream groups have been unclear about the fact that abortion is not a right unless all women can afford to have one. Others have completely ignored the forced sterilization that particularly Black and Latina women faced in the 1970s.

More recently, some of the leaders of the women's movement have made statements along the lines of, "If you don't support Hillary Clinton, you're a traitor to women." How do Black women factor into this? Do you have to choose between being a so-called traitor to your gender, or a traitor to your race? This type of reasoning doesn't factor in Clinton's pro-imperialist politics. If you don't vote for Clinton—who has supported policies that have brought absolute misery to immigrant women, women in Iraq, and poor women in the U.S.—somehow you're a traitor of women?

It's been said here before and can't be said enough in this particular, peculiar election year—we must be prepared to condemn any misogynist attacks against Clinton, just as we defend Obama against racist attacks, no matter how we feel about their politics. And every pro-feminist and anti-racist should be thinking about this.

Monica Moorehead: Black and Latin@ people are victims in disproportionate numbers of the subprime mortgage loans carried out by predatory loan companies. According to the United for a Fair Economy report, Black people account for close to 55 percent of all high cost mortgages while constituting just

over 13 percent of the overall general population.

And within these oppressed communities, women are especially targeted by these companies, including single mothers seeking a better life for themselves and their children. For instance, Black women are five times more likely to end up with a subprime mortgage than white men according to the Consumer Federation of America, a reflection of racist and sexist policies interwoven within capitalism.

Black people were in a housing crisis long before this foreclosure scandal erupted, especially with the attacks on public housing made even more acute in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita. But now this crisis affords the opportunity of merging together struggles of those facing the foreclosure of their homes with those facing evictions from

Feminism and Marxism

In 1971, Dorothy Ballan, a founding member of Workers World Party, wrote the groundbreaking pamphlet, "Feminism and Marxism," as the U.S. women's movement was gaining momentum. Not only did the pamphlet point out the importance of recognizing the special oppression amongst women, but it answered the still-heard, erroneous idea that men are the enemy to women's liberation. The pamphlet shows that patriarchal oppression was formed after the development of wealth in the form of private property. The following are excerpts from Ballan's pamphlet read by LeiLani Dowell at the March 28

their rented houses or apartments into a national movement to win a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions, a concession that can only be won from below in a united way. And the April 16 demonstration offers a wonderful opportunity to spark this kind of united fightback against these greedy bankers and the politicians in Congress whose pockets the bankers line. In light of the devastating impact that the crisis with foreclosures and public housing is having on oppressed and working women, a women’s contingent should be organized for April 16. This is an important vehicle for orienting the women’s movement in an independent, anti-racist, militant way.



Deirdre Griswold:

Today, more women are serving in the U.S. armed forces than at any other time in U.S. history, including World Wars I and II. One in every seven soldiers in the Middle East is a woman. As of a year ago, more than 160,500 U.S. women soldiers had served in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East since the U.S. invasions began.

Not too much has been written about the lives of these women once they become soldiers. In fact, it took a former general, Janis Karpinski, to blow the cover on how the women are treated by their fellow male soldiers—especially those of higher ranks.

Karpinski had been the commanding general at Abu-Ghraib prison camp, until she was scapegoated for the atrocious tortures there. Karpinski in 2006 told a panel of judges at a Commission of Inquiry for Crimes against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration that several women soldiers had actually died of dehydration because they refused to drink liquids late in the day. Why? They were afraid of being assaulted or even raped by male soldiers if they had to use the women’s latrine after dark.

Is it such a stretch to hope that women soldiers will realize that it’s the Iraqi people and all working and oppressed people fighting for their liberation, who are THEIR side? □

By Phebe Eckfeldt

Dr. Kenneth C. Edelin, a young African-American resident in obstetrics and gynecology at Boston City Hospital (BCH), was indicted for manslaughter in April of 1974 by a secret grand jury. His crime? Performing a legal abortion. In his recently published book, “Broken Justice: a true story of race, sex and revenge in a Boston courtroom,” Dr. Edelin tells the story of his indictment, trial and conviction by right-wing, racist, anti-abortion forces whose aim was to deny women the right to choose.

Edelin was the first African American to become chief resident of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the history of BCH. “OB/GYN at BCH was where I wanted to be, providing care to poor black women,” he writes. Edelin recalls always wanting to be a doctor. His desire hardened to resolve when, as a young boy of 12, he watched his beloved mother suffer and slowly die from breast cancer at age 46.

This and another vivid memory—witnessing the death of a young Black woman from an illegal abortion when he was a third-year medical student—set him on a more than 30-year career of providing quality health care to poor women and women of color. This put Edelin on the front line of defending their right to choose.

Edelin was tried and convicted in 1975. Boston during this period was a city seething with racist, right-wing forces, many of whom held positions of political power. After a court ordered busing to desegregate the public schools, racist white mobs stoned busloads of Black school children on a daily basis.

Restore Our Alienated Rights (ROAR), a neo-fascist, Klan-type organization, was the main anti-busing group and its headquarters was in Boston City Hall. Its leaders included City Councilor Dapper O’Neil and State Rep. Ray Flynn, who later became mayor. The Boston City Council was dominated by racists and right-wing Catholics who were not only incensed by the Black community exercising its right to equal, quality education but were also incensed by women exercising their right

to abortion and reproductive choice after Roe v. Wade in January 1973.

Flynn wrote a letter to the City Council complaining of abortion services at BCH. O’Neil convened a special hearing to investigate them—a hearing packed with testimony from anti-abortion fanatics that subsequently led to the indictment of Dr. Edelin. The racist, anti-busing forces and the right-wing anti-abortion forces—often the same people—had joined hands to lynch this young Black doctor. The goal was to stop abortions and turn back Roe v. Wade by intimidating doctors nationwide.

In the foreword to his book, Dr. Edelin writes, “At the center of this book are the rights of women to control their own bodies, and the rights of doctors to perform legitimate and legal medical procedures.

“For me, the struggles for reproductive rights for women and Civil Rights for African-Americans are intertwined and at the same time parallel. The denial of these two rights is an attempt by some to control the bodies of others. Both are forms of slavery. We must never let slavery in any form return to America.”

Edelin’s six-week trial for manslaughter was clearly a racist frameup. The judge and Assistant District Attorney Newman Flanagan were both anti-abortion. Flanagan later became infamous for putting many people of color in prison for excessive terms of confinement.

Flanagan’s opening witness was Dr. Mildred Jefferson, a founding member of Massachusetts Citizens for Life. The judge allowed the prosecution to use non-medical language to refer to embryos and fetuses as babies. The jury was shown a photo of a dead fetus. The jury consisted of nine men and three women—all white and ten of them Catholic. One juror later revealed that another used the “n” word to describe Edelin. They found Edelin guilty, but one year later the decision was overturned by the state Supreme Judicial Court.

Edelin’s case received national and international attention. Support poured in from people all over the country determined to fight tooth and nail for women’s right to choose. Doctors and lawyers called

offering advice, expertise and services. The Kenneth Edelin Defense Fund was set up. Edelin recalls, “Hundreds of letters came pouring in from across the country ... most were small \$5 and \$10 donations.... In their letters, women described the horrors they had gone through to obtain illegal abortions. Other donations were sent in memory of friends, daughters, aunts, sisters, cousins and even mothers who had died as a result of illegal abortions.”

Women and their supporters demonstrated every day outside the courtroom. The Boston Branch of Workers World Party helped organize an Edelin Defense Committee that held many demonstrations, meetings, press conferences and fundraisers.

Women were defending the clinics with their bodies. They also protested against sterilization abuse of Black and Latina women and involuntary research experimentation on poor women and women of color.

Workers World Party had brought together a coalition that organized a march against racism in Boston in December 1974. The 25,000 people who came out turned the tide of the racist onslaught. Multinational squads physically defended Black families’ homes that had been firebombed and stoned in East Boston and Hyde Park by racist forces. Bus drivers from United Steel Workers Union Local 8751 drove Black children to school despite a hail of rocks and epithets.

Dr. Kenneth Edelin’s story is both African-American history and women’s history. It is a story that needs to be told and a book that needs to be read far and wide. He is a hero who unwaveringly stood on the front lines in defense of women’s right to choose. His love, compassion and respect for women shines through in every page of this book, whether he’s talking about delivering a baby, offering services and counseling to pregnant teenagers, or setting up an alcohol abuse counseling service. He calls the Family Planning Clinic at BCH “a place of liberation.”

Edelin says that over the 30 years he practiced medicine, the reasons women needed an abortion were always different and very personal and the decision was always made with a lot of thought. □

Wal-Mart greed knows no bounds

By Kathy Durkin

On April 1, Wal-Mart dropped its claim against the Shanks due to public outcry and threats of boycott.

Capitalist greed knows no limits, as the Shanks family found out.

Debbie Shanks worked nights at the Wal-Mart in Cape Girardeau, Mo., so she

could be at home during the day with her three children. She stocked shelves for low wages.

In 2000, Shanks’ life turned upside down. Her minivan was hit by a tractor-trailer in rural Missouri, leaving her comatose for months, and then permanently disabled with brain damage and memory loss. Shanks, who is wheelchair-bound,

now lives in a nursing home and needs round-the-clock care; she’ll never be able to work again nor live at home.

In 2002, the Shanks won a lawsuit against G.E.M. Transportation, Inc., which owned the trucking company involved in the accident. Her settlement was \$700,000 for damages. After deducting legal fees, \$417,000 was put into a trust fund to pay

for her future medical care. Three years later, Wal-Mart struck. The corporation sued the Shanks for \$470,000 to retrieve all of the medical costs their health plan had paid out, plus legal fees and interest to pay for their lawsuit against the Shanks. They alleged the Shanks violated the health plan’s regulations by not reimbursing it.

Wal-Mart’s lawyers pointed to a little-known contract clause in fine print. This “catch-22” provision said that Wal-Mart can “recover” all medical costs it paid out if an employee wins a liability lawsuit.

Although only \$417,000 was left, Wal-Mart demanded the entire \$470,000—and refused a compromise payment proposed by the Shanks’ attorney.

Not surprisingly, Wal-Mart won their case, and in 2007 the Shanks lost their appeal in a federal appellate court. They were ordered to repay the \$277,000 that remained in the trust fund. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the Shanks’ case, effectively siding with Wal-Mart and giving the green light to other corporations to follow suit—which they are doing.

As corporations foist more health care

Continued on page 11

ism/Class view of women’s oppression

women’s forum in New York:

At the dawn of humanity ... paternity was not even understood, let alone determined. Therefore ... the gens, a unit of blood relatives, descended through the mother.

There came a point when the men no longer went hunting[, l]earning from the women to domesticate and breed animals. ... For the first time in history, they produced more than what it cost to maintain themselves.

This accumulation of wealth increased the importance of the status of the man. But as long as mother-right prevailed, he could never bequeath his wealth to his

children. ... This became intolerable and as we know all too well, mother-right was overthrown and replaced by father-right.

Part of the struggle for the success of the revolution for socialism is an imperative necessity of swiftly raising the level of women to equal participation in the struggle and obliterating all manifestations of male chauvinism and male supremacy in that struggle.

The women’s struggle is not subordinate to the class struggle. It is itself a form of class struggle, especially if consciously conducted against the bourgeoisie. ... Marx said that every political struggle is a class struggle. □



Dorothy Ballan, arms folded, in 1964.

CULTURAL GENOCIDE: *In Tibet or New Orleans?*

By **Larry Hales**

The Dalai Lama claims that China is committing “cultural genocide” against the Tibetan people, and his claims and news of the events unfolding in the regional capital of Lhasa have captured a great deal of attention in the major media outlets in the U.S.

The “cause” of Tibet and the accusation of “cultural genocide” are not new. “Free Tibet” bumper stickers can often be seen at peace rallies, and it would seem that the case of Tibet is a real national liberation struggle of an oppressed people struggling for independence from an imperialist or colonial master.

However, the issue of Tibet has been foisted upon some sectors of the movement in the U.S. in order to weaken China. The relationship between the U.S., with its aim to undermine the gains of the Chinese revolution, and the Dalai Lama and his clique is an old one and goes all the way back to the CIA manufactured “uprising” of 1959.

It is greatly ironic that the corporate media in the U.S., which operate as mouthpieces for the owners and rulers of U.S. society, can use the Dalai Lama’s claim of “cultural genocide,” especially considering that the U.S. has committed genocide against Indigenous people and

cut the ethnic/tribal ties to Africa of 40 million Black people.

At a 2002 talk sponsored by the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, Barry Sautman pointed out, “The problems of Tibetans are typical of minorities in the era of large modern states.” Sautman is an associate professor of Social Science at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. (www.international.ucla.edu)

Sautman argues that, though Chinese culture has naturally influenced Tibetan culture, “By not defining cultural genocide the Tibetan exiles can label any changes from 1959 as cultural genocide, although many of these changes could be expected to have occurred without the issue of cultural genocide arising.”

Sautman refutes the claim that Tibet has been flooded by Chinese migration by showing data that are not denied even by the U.S., which show that most Chinese that go to Tibet usually stay for only a few years and that many who claim to live in Tibet only claim to do so in order to receive higher pensions.

Western culture has infiltrated Tibet as well, as it has many other societies around the world, but this is rarely looked upon as “cultural genocide,” or even as cultural imperialism.

The Dalai Lama is a separatist, connect-

ed to the old feudal relations that existed in Tibet before 1959, and his claims that Tibetan society was a free and open society where people lived harmoniously is a misrepresentation of history.

Historian Michael Parenti, in a piece titled “Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth,” states: “Until 1959, when the Dalai Lama last presided over Tibet, most of the arable land was still organized into manorial estates worked by serfs. These estates were owned by two social groups: the rich secular landlords and the rich theocratic lamas. ...

“Old Tibet has been misrepresented by some Western admirers as ‘a nation that required no police force because its people voluntarily observed the laws of karma.’ In fact, it had a professional army, albeit a small one, that served mainly as a gendarmerie for the landlords to keep order, protect their property, and hunt down runaway serfs.” (www.michaelparenti.org)

It is the destruction of the old mode of production and property relations that angers the separatist movement that surrounds the Dalai Lama. The U.S. cares nothing about Buddhism, Tibetan monks or Tibetan culture, so it never mentions how the culture has been preserved, or that Tibet has been a part of China for centuries.

Jin Zhigou, chief editor of the magazine China’s Tibet, says that the Dalai Lama and those that surround him use the fact that people are increasingly interested in Tibetan culture to influence attitudes by crying “cultural genocide.” But what culture would there be to spark anyone’s interest if it were being wiped out and the process of “cultural genocide” was nearing its fifth decade?

Jin says, “With the continuous social progress and the advancement of productive forces, it’s a natural thing for some cultural phenomena that are attached to relatively backward means of production

to fade out of history. ... But the cultural activities closely connected with the salt-transporting, such as singing and dancing, rituals and taboos, have been preserved.”

“We needn’t have to keep black slavery in the United States just in order to enjoy the Blues,” he said. “The disappearance of salt-transporting by yaks won’t lead to the vanishing of the cultural elements it gave birth to.” He points out the millions of yuan, Chinese currency, that have been and are being spent to maintain both the intangible and structural parts of Tibetan culture.

This attempt at cultural preservation is greatly different than what happens in the U.S. The Hurricane Katrina tragedy and aftermath provide a clear illumination.

“The roots run deep in New Orleans” is a popular saying amongst Black New Orleanians. New Orleans is sacred ground, but this has not stopped local, state and federal officials from denying the right to return for evacuees, destroying public housing and entire neighborhoods, denying the right to jobs and re-imagining and attempting to rebuild the entire city for wealthy whites. Is this not cultural genocide?

The capitalist system cares nothing about culture. Capitalism sees culture as a commodity or subterfuge, something to use for profit or to undermine a people. Is this not what has happened to Black culture?

Take hip-hop culture, the musical aspect alone, and look at its history and its current state. Where hip-hop music is now from where it was is the difference between self-determination and a people determining their culture, and a system that is perpetuated by exploitation.

Anyone with a scant knowledge of the history of the U.S. can see its hypocrisy when it comes to supporting the Dalai Lama’s claim of “cultural genocide,” and can see the real motive is to undermine the People’s Republic of China. □

Nepal’s revolutionaries stand with China

By **David Hoskins**

While China gears up to host the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, U.S. imperialism and its allies have embarked on a concerted campaign to undermine China’s global image and its ability to peacefully host the Olympics.

As workers sit in front of their television sets and watch the nightly news they are faced with an Orwellian contradiction between the images that appear before their eyes and the commentary of the newscasters reporting on the story. The images clearly show rioters, many in monks’ robes, attacking motorcyclists and taxi drivers, while shops are being burned to the ground.

The image of a peaceful Tibetan liberation movement led by a benevolent spiritual leader—the Dalai Lama—has been seared into the consciousness of many of the world’s workers, particularly young workers and students. It is a carefully crafted image

It is also a lie. The image has helped spearhead a multimillion dollar industry that markets “Free Tibet” T-shirts and paraphernalia and selling Dalai’s books extolling his versions of “peace” and world “harmony.”

The feudal reality of Tibet was very different. Workers World’s Gary Wilson wrote a detailed history of Tibet:

“In the 1940s, Tibet was a feudal theocracy with a dual papacy—the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. By all accounts, the Dalai Lama was considered supreme in political matters.” (“It was no Shangri-la: Hollywood hides Tibet’s true history,” WW, Dec. 4, 1997)

“The vast majority of the people of Tibet were serfs. A small part of the population, about 5 percent, was slaves to the nobility.

“Women were considered inferior to men,” Wilson reports.

Capital punishment and the whip were common forms of punishment, according

to Gorkar Mebon, the mayor of Lhasa in the 1950s.

“After the overthrow of Tibetan feudalism, in 1959 the serfs opened an exhibition of the torture instruments used against them,” Wilson says.

The Chinese Communist Party led a revolutionary struggle to help Tibetans liberate themselves from this barbaric feudal serfdom. Dalai and his allies have never forgiven the Chinese government for liberating the Tibetans.

Nepal’s revolutionaries stand in solidarity with China

The revolutionary movement in neighboring Nepal, led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), has waged a heroic struggle since 1996 against a brutal feudal monarchy similar to that of pre-revolutionary Tibet. The similarity of their struggles has given the CPN(M) a hands-on perspective of the lies, violations of sovereignty and violence that imperialism is willing to perpetuate against liberation movements.

With this in mind, the CPN(M) issued a statement of unequivocal support for China in the face of U.S.-sponsored violence in that country. The statement “strongly condemns the incident that put at risk the freedom and sovereignty of the Chinese people.”

The U.S. and its imperialist allies support a false “liberation” struggle in Tibet against the Chinese government while opposing an authentic revolutionary movement in Nepal against the remnants of an autocratic feudal monarchy.

In neither instance does imperialism genuinely care about democracy, freedom or human rights. In both instances the goal is to undermine China’s independence and influence in the region and to ensure that the revolutionary momentum in Nepal does not spread to India, Bangladesh or Bhutan so that private property and capitalist profits will be protected against the legitimate interests of the oppressed peoples. □



After rape of schoolgirl

Okinawans protest U.S. military

By **LeiLani Dowell**

A March 23 rally in Okinawa, Japan, protested the continued presence of the U.S. military on the island, after the rape of a 14-year-old schoolgirl by a U.S. Marine. The protest cited a string of crimes involving U.S. service members, including the recent murder of a taxi driver in which a man from the U.S. Navy is being questioned.

According to Agence France-Presse and Xinhua, the protest was organized by local parents’ groups, lawyers, labor unions and women’s rights activists. (March 23) Despite driving rain and wind, about 6,000 people turned out to denounce the U.S. military—making it the largest dem-

onstration against the U.S. military there since 1995, after U.S. service members gang raped a 12-year-old girl.

In the current case, the soldier was handed over from Japanese custody into the hands of U.S. military authorities. Their response was simply to impose a two-week, round-the-clock curfew on U.S. soldiers and relatives at the Okinawa base and two others in Japan. The survivor has dropped the charges after intense media coverage of the case—some of which blamed the survivor.

More than 40,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Japan; and more than half of those are located in Okinawa.

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Cuba, Venezuela gov'ts denounce China bashing

Cuba condemns campaign against China Olympics

By Prensa Latina
Havana

The Cuban government condemned the attempts to organize a politically motivated crusade to make the 2008 Olympic Games in the city of Beijing, China, fail this year.

The Cuban National TV News Report published a statement pointing out the Cuban authorities' opposition to any interference in Chinese domestic affairs.

"A media campaign is being carried out, followed by actions destined to undermine international trust in the capacity of the Chinese government to fulfill its commitments," the text said.

The Cuban statement added that "it is evident these disturbances have been prepared and promoted from abroad."

CNN accused of distorting Tibet events

By Prensa Latina
Havana

Chinese internauts (internet astronauts, tr.) accused CNN and other Western media today of distorting violent actions in Tibet aimed at damaging China's image.

Internauts, according to Xinhua news agency, are using their personal Web sites and chat forums to publish real photos of the events in Tibet, which are later cut and edited by CNN and other media.

A picture widely spread shows participants in riots throwing stones and inflammable bottles against a military truck, but in CNN the image is cut, showing only a bunch of people running.

Xinhua reported that it had tried to obtain some commentary on this from the CNN office in Beijing, but CNN's phones were either permanently busy or else nobody answered the calls.

The slanderous way the information is presented also was highlighted by China Daily, which showed how a German daily newspaper published photos of clashes between Nepalese police and youths, presenting them as taken in Tibet.

The Berlin Morning Post published a photo of a youth of the Han ethnic group—the majority in China—wounded in Lhasa, who the police rescued and took to a safe place, but daily reporters turned him into "a Tibetan insurgent arrested by the police."

Some Western media have intentionally omitted mentioning the cruelty of the rioters, revealing the media's hypocrisy when talking of objectivity and impartiality, said Xinhua.

These media have barely mentioned the five women store workers who were burned alive when the rioters set fire to the commercial outlet.

Venezuela's Chávez blames U.S. for Tibet unrest

By combined wire services

On March 24, Venezuela's socialist President Hugo Chávez charged that the United States was behind the violent protests in Tibet. He said the protests were aimed at trying to destabilize China.

"The U.S. imperialists want to divide China. And they're causing problems there in Tibet," Chávez said in his speech. "They're trying to sabotage the Olympics in Beijing, and behind that is the hand of imperialism."

"We ask the world to support China to neutralize this plan, which aims to sabotage the Olympics," he added.

"You see the images of the violence in Tibet. Who is that against? Against China," Chávez said. "It's the U.S. empire that wants to weaken China, because China is rising up," Chávez said.

Reuters, which could not just report this news, added a commentary: "Leftists in Latin America see the Tibetan independence movement led by the Dalai Lama as a pro-Washington group of conservative monks." □

100,000 teachers fight gov't attack

By André Levy
Lisbon, Portugal

Public sector workers in Portugal, with teachers in the lead, have opened an impressive fightback struggle against a government attack that threatens both public services and the workers themselves. Following dozens of protests throughout the country, on March 8 some 100,000 of Portugal's 150,000 teachers marched down one of the main avenues of downtown Lisbon in a massive protest.

Over the last three years, the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS) government of José Sócrates—which is socialist in name only—has carried out a full blown, broad attack on the public services and public service workers. This includes reducing the network of maternity wards and emergency clinics, and introducing public administration changes called "reforms" that have reduced wages and pensions of government workers.

One of the most targeted sectors is that of public schools. The state budget for schools was cut and thousands of schools closed. These closings increase student commutes and strengthen the forces that are leading to a massive depopulation and aging of the country's interior.

The government imposed a profound change of school management that erodes the schools' democratic character. The change replaces school boards with the more powerful figure of the school director and broadens school councils (which determine school policies) to include parents and local businesses, placing teachers and other school workers in the minority.

The minister of education, Maria de Luz Rodrigues, has been set on changing the rules regarding how much time public school teachers work. By counting only class time, she claims that teachers work a low number of hours. This omits class preparation and student evaluation time. One rule requires that teachers spend more time in school performing administrative duties.

The new career structure creates divisions among regular teachers and so-called "titled" teachers with the purpose of limiting the access to higher-level positions. These positions are now subject to quotas. Even long-term teachers with impeccable evaluations may be unable to reach higher-paying positions.

The minister introduced a new teacher evaluation system in the middle of the school year. Teachers will be evaluated by their colleagues and based on student grades. This creates an incentive to inflate grades and an imbalance between teachers in rich and poor socioeconomic districts. All in all, the "reforms" are dictated by administrative and financial priorities, rather than educational and pedagogical aims, aiming to punish teachers and destroy the public schools.

Teachers have not accepted these reforms and have been involved in a continuous mass struggle for more than a year and a half. The government has been inflexible and has attempted to isolate and divide teachers. A massive public relations campaign has characterized teachers as "privileged" public servants and responsible for poor education results. The aim of this campaign is to create a conflict between teachers and other public servants and the general public. Police have harassed unions. Schools have been ordered to keep a record of which teachers strike.

But still, teachers have continued their struggle. The massive March 8 "March of Indignation" had the participation of two-thirds of the professional sector, the most massive protest of any sector in Portugal's history.

Teachers expressed their indignation at the government's disrespect and disregard toward teachers and their unions. They waved white handkerchiefs demanding the minister of education resign. They demanded a change in education policies and the renegotiation of the Teacher Career and School Management "reforms."

The protesters demanded respect for the professional character and union rights of teachers and for academic autonomy and freedom. They demanded measures to promote the quality of education and reduce the levels of unemployment and job insecurity that afflict teachers.

Despite the massive turnout and the impressive show of force and unity, the minister of education downplayed the demonstration and restated her policies. Faced with such stubbornness, teachers have promised to continue their struggle.

André Levy is a correspondent of Avante, the weekly newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party.

PORTUGAL



PHOTO: ANDRÉ LEVY/AVANTE

Longtime activist sent to federal prison

By Sara Flounders
New York

Ed Lewinson is 78 years old and blind. On April 2 he leaves for the federal prison in Elkton, Ohio, to serve a 90-day prison sentence based on his 2007 arrest protesting the School of the Americas (U.S. School of Torture) at Ft. Benning, Ga.

Lewinson is one of a dozen people who were arrested at the SOA Watch protest for crossing the line on to the base. More than 20,000 people participated in this year's annual November protest. It was Ed's fourth arrest at the Ft. Benning protests. When offered a more lenient sentence, he insisted that all the defendants be treated and sentenced equally.

Although Lewinson is blind from birth he has always been determined to participate fully in political struggles and in all aspects of life. He has been a political activist for almost 60 years and has been arrested numerous times for sit-ins and civil disobedience actions and participated in hundreds of picket lines, demonstrations and rallies.

He is active in political struggles in Newark with Peoples Organization for Progress and N.J. Peace Action. He has been an active volunteer with the International Action Center for 14 years since first attending an event linking war as wealth and profits for a few and misery and poverty for millions.

He attended Detroit's Northern High School, the only school in the area that offered a Braille class. Northern also was predominantly Black, and Lewinson's first lessons in civil rights came from listening to the stories of his classmates.



WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Attorney/activist Lynne Stewart, Rev. Lucius Walker & others pay tribute to Ed Lewinson (right) at April 1 send-off meeting".

In 1949, at age 19, Lewinson participated with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a pioneering civil rights organization, in the sit-ins and struggles to desegregate the Greyhound Bus Terminal in Washington D.C.

In the early 1960s he participated in sit-ins to desegregate restaurants along the Route 40 Baltimore-Washington corridor. In Brooklyn he participated in actions to desegregate housing, and he was part of the earliest struggles of Local 1199 to organize hospital workers.

In the mass civil disobedience actions to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lewinson was arrested twice—once in Philadelphia at the Liberty Bell and once in Washington, D.C.

He participated in actions to end the U.S. starvation sanctions against Iraq, including making several difficult trips to Iraq with IAC delegations to take desperately needed medical supplies there and several trips to Cuba with Pastors for Peace and the IAC to break the blockade. He has also traveled to North Korea.

The International Action Center is organizing an April 1 Solidarity Send-off for Ed Lewinson in New York. □



More proof of stark poverty

It is now fashionable for oh-so-sincere analysts to tell us that, yes, the workers who have lost their jobs and/or homes may be suffering, but so are the poor bankers and others who invested in high-risk mortgages. Why, they have seen millions melt away before their very eyes!

Excuse us for our mean-spiritedness toward the very, very rich, but, to quote Dick Cheney, “So?”

Some statistics have come to light that show how a worker who is really up against it has nothing in common with a busted banker. They show how very stark, painful and wrenching poverty has become in this country. These statistics have to do with food stamps.

You have to be desperately poor to qualify for food stamps. You have to prove that without them, you’d be more than just hungry—you’d be starving.

Take the income qualifications, for example. If you live alone and have a gross income of more than \$250 a week (\$1,062 a month), you’re not eligible. Can you imagine trying to survive on, say, \$260 a week and being told you’re getting too much to qualify for food stamps?

There are lots of people who make even less than that and still are not eligible: the undocumented. They can get up at 5 in the morning to line up for a day job, or maybe to clean motel rooms or work in the fields, all for miserable wages. And if those wages are less than \$250 a week, as they often are, they’ll get no assistance at all to help them survive. They may be picking the beans others eat, or the strawberries, and not be able to afford enough food for their families.

Another reason to be rejected for food stamps is if you have assets of more than \$2,000. Have you saved a little bit in an IRA? Do you have a savings bond put away for those really, really rainy days? And, together with your cash on hand to pay bills with, do they add up to \$2,001? Whoa, there! You don’t qualify for food stamps.

Which is why it’s all the more amazing that the number of people who DO qualify for food stamps is skyrocketing.

The Congressional Budget Office has just released its projections for the num-

ber of people expected to receive food stamps this fiscal year and next—the 2009 fiscal year starting this coming Oct. 1. While 26.5 million got food stamps in fiscal 2007, that figure rose by over a million this year to 27.8 million, and will grow even more, to 28 million, in the next fiscal year. The future figure is based on expected rises in unemployment and underemployment.

Already, 14 states had seen their food stamp enrollment rise to record numbers by last December. Top among them is Michigan, once a state with a strong economy and many well-paying union jobs. One in every eight people there now receives food stamps—more than twice the number back in 2000.

The rise in poverty, as measured by food stamp eligibility, is not confined to any one region of the country. States where the increase was more than 10 percent last year were Arizona, Florida, Maryland, Nevada, North Dakota and Rhode Island. Altogether, 40 states experienced an increase over the previous year.

In New York, the “Empire” state and home to both rich Westchester County and Wall Street, one of every 10 people is on food stamps.

What do people on food stamps receive? The average is about \$100 a month worth of groceries. That figure would be much higher if the federal government hadn’t frozen its allowance for household expenses at 1996 levels.

With prices rising, wages dropping and layoffs leaving so many high and dry, getting government assistance is becoming critical for survival for many millions. But this government of and for the capitalist class is too busy bailing out the billionaires and waging wars for oil companies’ profits to care about the workers.

In this rich country, poverty is rising rapidly even as there’s an excess of everything. Just as during the Great Depression mountains of grain and other crops were burned to keep prices up while millions were starving, so today there’s a glut of food and houses even as millions are hungry and homeless. Welcome to capitalism—a destructive, evil system that’s gotta go. □

Rev. Wright, Obama & freedom of speech

Continued from page 3

believe exists in the hearts and minds of the descendants of enslaved Africans; that like the rest of America, we can go to any church, pray to any God, be preached to by anyone; leave church and then ignore everything that was said by the preacher and break the promises we made to God.

For over forty years, our government knowingly and with purpose ignored infected descendants of the enslaved with syphilis. In light of the Tuskegee experiment as it was known, America must understand why we look at the HIV/AIDS infection rate among African Americans with a raised eyebrow. America should understand why the descendants of Africans see the greatness of America through a different prism; enslavement, Jim Crow, Ku Klux Klan, Dred Scott, Plessy, lynchings, police brutality, inferior educational and employment opportunities.

The test of whether we have made racial

progress toward equality will be seen through future primaries. We must not allow the most segregated time in America to destroy the legitimate campaign of this African American, Barack Obama. No other candidate/citizen will have their love and patriotism questioned in this manner and overtone. African Americans believe that this is a negative legacy from the period of enslavement. What history suffers America to question the patriotism and loyalty of any Descendant of enslaved Africans. Only a Black person would suffer the indignity of being judged by the words of another.

If we have truly achieved equality, then we will judge Barack Obama solely on his character, his ideas and what we believe that he can offer in the rebuilding of America; and we will not use the words of one man to characterize the humanity of another, and all the while we continue to die for America.

E-mail the writer at fitzverity@aol.com.

In Chicago, Mexico

Repression breeds resistance

Editor’s note: *Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Throughout the year, we will share with our readers some of the paper’s content over the past half century. Below are excerpts from two articles in 1968—the first one is on the police riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and the second one is on the repression against students in Mexico, days before the Olympics were held there. Read the full text of these articles at www.workers.org.*



WW in 1968

The lessons of Chicago

By Fred Goldstein

Sept. 13, 1968—The violence openly inflicted on liberals and radicals alike at the Chicago Democratic Convention confirms that the U.S. ruling class is entering a new phase in which their reliance upon deception is to be increasingly abandoned in favor of the use of force. The use of violence against the white population (after centuries against the Black) is part of the preparations for stepped-up attacks on the oppressed people around the globe.

All attempts to place the responsibility on the insignificant hired thug of the bosses, Mayor Richard Daley, are calculated to mask this fundamental shift.

Thousands of U.S. troops, tanks, jeeps, and all the other necessities of combat cannot be shifted around the country at the cost of creating great political unrest (to say nothing of the expense) on the say-so of such a relatively low-ranking political stooge as Daley. Nor can National Guard troops be called upon by a mayor.

For that matter, the Chicago Police Department would never dare to “mar the image” of the entire Democratic Party unless it had received explicit orders from the party hierarchy to crack heads. The White House, the Pentagon, the Democratic National Committee and the entire capitalist establishment were all involved in the Chicago operation.

In short, Mayor Daley was working for the ruling class and not they for him, as the bourgeois news media imply when they either condemn or condone “Daley’s handling” of the fascist attack on anti-war protesters in Chicago.

Of course, the billionaires did not shift

from fraud to force arbitrarily. It’s just that their bag of tricks is just about empty and their two war candidates are about equally discredited.

It is no coincidence that they started clubbing, gassing and breaking heads just at the moment when the “peace” campaign of Eugene McCarthy was about to come to an ignominious end.

The rulers who rigged the convention long in advance knew that McCarthy was to be discarded in Chicago. And they also knew that thousands of youth whom the McCarthy campaign had kept off the streets would be back on the Chicago streets together with thousands of radical youth who had never fallen for the imperialist-liberal McCarthy in the first place.

So the bosses prepared well ahead of time to deal with the anger and indignation which was as inevitable as the Humphrey-Nixon race. They decided to give the white youth a taste of the treatment hitherto reserved for the Black liberation struggle.

The bourgeoisie used strong-arm methods to brush the liberals aside and thus demonstrated the fraudulence and the futility of imperialist democracy.

If the liberal politicians folded up at the first show of force by the ruling class, the militant youth did not.

In general the Chicago events have shown that the capitalists will always resort to force if popular will stands in the way of their imperialist objectives.

These events have confirmed the Marxist analysis of the state. This resort to violence on the eve of new imperialist crises has pointed out to thousands of young people that revolutionary resistance to boss rule is the only way to stop wars of aggression.

Despite gov’t repression, mounting deaths, Mexican students fight back fearlessly

Sept. 24—Mexican students fought an all-night battle using bullets, gasoline bombs and barricades made out of buses after riot police fired point blank into a crowd attending an anti-government rally in Mexico City.

More than fifteen students were killed, many more wounded and hundreds arrested, including leaders, as the struggle against the repression of the Díaz Ordaz government entered into its third month.

Student heroism reached new heights as the government sent the army to occupy the huge vocational school complex in the northern section of the city. Armored cars and patrol wagons guarded school buildings as the school was put under siege. The National University was occupied last week, touching off even greater protests than those which caused the occupation in the first place. It was the first time in 40 years that the army set foot on campus.

The latest atrocities against the students began outside the National Polytechnic Institute when several thousand students gathered in the streets for an anti-government rally. The police fired into the

unarmed crowd. The students, seasoned by two months of battle against the army and the hated Grenadiers (Mexico City’s Tactical Patrol Force), were ready and they answered back.

“For the first time,” read a New York Times dispatch of Sept. 24, “the students, most of them of high school age, used firearms on a large scale ... students fired on police from school buildings and from nearby houses.”

Gasoline bombs were a principal weapon of the Mexican youth, just like the Black youth in the U.S. Only a block away from one of the schools occupied by the army, teenagers were stopping cars and asking for contributions of gasoline. “For the people of Mexico,” the youths implored the motorists.

The students also seized a gasoline tanker truck, according to an Associated Press dispatch of the same day, during what was described as the fiercest fighting “since the revolutionary days of the 1920s.” The students hurled the Molotov cocktails at buses commandeered by the Grenadiers.

U.S.-backed Iraq assault on Mahdi Army fails

By John Catalinotto

A U.S.-backed assault by Iraqi puppet troops on Premier Nuri al-Maliki’s rivals killed 605 Iraqis and some U.S. troops but failed to crush the Mahdi Army, its target.

Led by the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, the Mahdi Army is the largest non-governmental armed force, with its troops coming from the poorest population in the Shiite community.

Fighting went on full force in the southern city of Basra, a center of oil production, for five days. It also spread to Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad like Sadr City. The Mahdi Army and either government or U.S. troops held pitched battles in many parts of the country, including Nasiriyah, Hilla, Al-Amarah and other places. Even the fortified “Green Zone” in the capital came under mortar attack.

Premier al-Maliki had gone to Basra himself to demand Mahdi Army commanders surrender and turn over their weapons within 72 hours or face destruction. Instead, U.S. and British air power had to intervene to stop the Mahdi Army from overrunning Iraqi government positions. Al-Maliki was evacuated by a U.S. helicopter on March 30, according to the Iraq Resistance Report.

The Mahdi Army held its ground everywhere. In some areas it sent the puppet army running.

On March 31 al-Sadr ordered the Mahdi Army to comply with a cease fire. But he said his forces would refuse to hand over their arms as long as the U.S. occupied Iraq. Al-Sadr also demanded that the government grant a general amnesty to the Mahdi Army, release all imprisoned members of this force who have not been convicted of crimes, and bring back “the displaced people who have fled their homes as a result of military operations.”

The attack on the Mahdi Army turned into a small-scale version of the U.S.-Israeli abortive attack on Lebanon in the summer of 2006, when forces led by Hezbollah rebuffed the powerful Israeli Army. An Iraqi puppet Interior Ministry official said that “in the aftermath of the failed assault, the government had dismissed 150 police officers and 400 policemen for refusing to fight in the conflict.” (New York Times, April 1)

As of the morning of April 1, the media

reported that the ceasefire was holding. One Mahdi Army official said, however, that al-Sadr’s order to prohibit fighting applied only to Iraqi security forces. If U.S. troops enter Sadr City, he said, the fight goes on. “Maybe our case with the government is over,” he said. “But not with the occupiers.” (New York Times, April 1)

A defeat for the U.S. occupation

Faced with a military debacle, the U.S. government and the Pentagon argued that the attack was completely the initiative of the al-Maliki government. According to the New York Times, however, the U.S. had all along been pushing al-Maliki to attack the Mahdi Army, which Washington considers too close an ally of Iran. Bush had called the clashes “a defining moment in Iraq.” (March 31)

The U.S. denial was also belied by the rapid intervention of U.S. and British air power. All over Basra, U.S. bombs were killing Iraqi civilians, whom Pentagon statements described as “militia gangsters.”

The al-Maliki regime’s spin was his claim that Iraqi troops were not target-

ing the Mahdi Army, but only “criminal elements” that had taken over Basra. It is apparent al-Maliki was weakened as a result of the failed assault, and al-Sadr strengthened. Both al-Maliki and the U.S. Embassy had to publicly thank al-Sadr for declaring the cease-fire.

This all may impact further on a national vote set for October. Even before the fighting, al-Sadr’s group was expected to win this vote big.

Washington’s initial strategy to conquer Iraq—based on “shock and awe”—collapsed long ago. Once an Iraqi resistance arose, the Pentagon proved incapable of winning, holding and stabilizing the country and exploiting its oil.

The U.S. soon moved from “shock and awe” to “divide and conquer” tactics. While Washington failed to conquer Iraq, it did succeed in dividing the Iraqis. Some major Shiite organizations that had been opponents of the Saddam Hussein government joined the puppet regime.

In the predominantly Sunni areas, the heroic resistance of nationalist, Islamic and Baathist-led forces stopped the

Pentagon from securing and stabilizing Iraq. But up to now the U.S. occupation forces have been able to dig in and hold on, even as morale among U.S. troops plummets.

In all this the Mahdi Army and al-Sadr have played a contradictory role. On the one hand, the Mahdi Army rank and file is anti-occupation. Washington has attacked them with both words and weapons, calling them puppets of Iran.

On the other hand, instead of turning their fire on the U.S. occupiers and their local allies, the Mahdi Army has accepted a role in the puppet Maliki government. The question now is: Will the U.S.-al-Maliki open attack on the Mahdi Army push it closer to the Iraqi resistance movement?

In the midst of the Iraqi turmoil, U.S. Gen. David Petraeus is coming to Congress April 8-9 to report on “the success of the surge” and plead for more funds for a criminal U.S. war that has already cost the lives of a million Iraqis and 4,300 U.S. occupation troops.

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Eyewitness report from Zimbabwe

The Brooklyn-based December 12 Movement issued the following statement titled “West launches pre-emptive propaganda strike to depose presidency of Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe” on March 30 from Harare, Zimbabwe. D 12’s International Secretariat sent an official observer team to Zimbabwe for the presidential and parliamentary elections.

The 8-year Western-led campaign to overthrow the leadership of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF Party is quickly escalating. Western media, in particular CNN and the BBC, are banned from reporting in Zimbabwe, but have nevertheless acted as conduits for disinformation reports circulated by Western intelligence sources (i.e. CIA, MI5) on the inability to hold a free and fair election in Zimbabwe.

Before the voting for president took place on March 29, the Western press had reported that the only way President Mugabe and ZANUPF would win was by “electoral violence” or “rigging the voting.”

This “vote rigging” accusation was a pre-emptive strike against the anticipated

victory of President Mugabe and ZANU-PF. It was intended to create the false perception in the minds of the Western public that ZANU-PF lacks popular support from the masses of the Zimbabwean people and that any victory could only come from cheating.

The December 12th Movement delegation is in Zimbabwe as one of a large contingent of international observers to the voting. We went to several sites and spoke with polling officials as well as agents from all of the parties running for office.

All found the election peaceful with no problems in people being able to cast their votes freely. By the close of voting yesterday, the West, realizing that it could not play the “electoral violence” card, immediately moved to its next tactic, “vote rigging.”

Prior to the March 29 voting, all parties agreed that there should be no premature claims of victory until all the votes were counted. Nevertheless, the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) declared victory only a few minutes after the polls closed when it was both physically and factually impossible to have

actually known the results.

By doing so the MDC laid another brick in the false “pre-emptive strike accusations.” The logic being that when all the votes did finally come in, if MDC lost, it could only happen because the votes had been rigged.

Be clear, the United States and Britain’s real contradiction with President Mugabe and ZANU-PF has everything to do with African people reclaiming their stolen land and nothing to do with a concern for democracy. They have unsuccessfully tried to overthrow President Mugabe and ZANU-PF, through vicious economic sanctions (like the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2002), media demonization and the establishment and funding of opposition parties like the MDC.

The West believes that by “making the economy scream” they can create enough popular discontent in Zimbabwe to remove President Mugabe and ZANU-PF. This election was their last best shot. We urge those in the West to critically analyze Western media reports and to not believe the “vote rigging” hype. □

Wal-Mart greed knows no bounds

Continued from page 7
costs onto the workers, many insurance contracts include these “subrogation” clauses, authorizing medical plans to “recover” claims’ costs from damages settlements won by workers. To add insult to injury, employees must pay for the legal expenses of the corporation that sued them! Some insurers won’t pay medical claims until employees sign pledges to repay them from any injury settlements. (wsj.com, Nov. 20)

In 2006, the Supreme Court aided corporate health plans by unanimously ruling that they could go after employees’ liability settlements.

The health-insurers’ lobby, American Benefits Council and America’s Health Insurance Plans, says medical plans annually “recover” \$1 billion from third-party liability settlements. (wsj.com, Nov. 20)

Sadly, the Shanks lost one son in Iraq in 2006. Debbie Shanks can’t remember this and grieves again each time she hears about it. Her husband, who is recovering from cancer, works two jobs. He divorced

her so she could qualify for public assistance for medical and nursing home care.

But Wal-Mart still insists Debbie Shanks owes them the entire \$470,000—an amount the corporation makes every 38 seconds.

Wal-Mart’s chief CEO, Lee Scott, earns that amount weekly. The Waltons, owners of Wal-Mart, are the U.S.’s richest family. The company made \$11 billion in profits last year. Neither their family foundation, the corporation’s “charity,” nor their Associates in Critical Need Foundation will help the Shanks. (Wal-Martwatch.com)

Wal-Mart’s medical plans are notoriously inadequate and expensive for their workers. Less than half of their low-paid work force are covered. Deductibles, premiums and co-payments are exorbitant; hidden fees are everywhere. The company phases out full-time workers or shifts them to part time to elude medical coverage. (Wal-Martwatch.com)

This corporation spends woe-

fully little for their employees’ health. In 2004, Wal-Mart spent \$1.5 billion on medical insurance, approximately one-half of one percent of its \$285 billion in sales that year. (Wakeupwalmart.com)

There is national outrage against Wal-Mart’s greed. Many people vow to never shop there again in solidarity with the Shanks. The Service Employees International Union and many individuals have sent donations to the Shanks.

What is needed is a strong national people’s campaign against corporate greed and for universal



Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández and René González.

“An official at a hospital near the vocational school complex said the figure of 15 known dead was less than the actual death toll because students were seen hauling away some bodies,” according to the AP.

The purpose of the students in seizing their own dead was to counter government lies about student casualties. (Until today the government has not admitted to any student deaths, although the students claim scores were killed.) The police and the army incinerate student corpses.

The violent fury of the Díaz Ordaz government against the students grows more intense each day as the scheduled date, Oct. 12, for the opening of the Olympics approaches. But the Mexican guardians of \$1 billion in U.S. investments who keep the workers and peasants in slavery in the name of the revolution are facing a youth movement which has proven that it is ready to die in the streets “for the people of Mexico” much as the July 26 Movement was ready to die for the people of Cuba in the 1950s. And just as in Cuba under Batista, the crisis of Díaz Ordaz in Mexico is the crisis of his U.S. masters. □

Richardson da su apoyo a Obama

¿Qué impacto tiene sobre l@s inmigrantes?

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

El Gobernador Bill Richardson de Nuevo México dio el 21 de marzo su apoyo a la candidatura de Barack Obama para presidente.

En su discurso de apoyo, el cual fue difundido en vivo por la cadena CNN y distribuido ampliamente en los noticieros, Richarson se refirió al discurso de Barack Obama sobre el tema de la raza.

Richarson dijo: “En esta semana el Senador Barack Obama pronunció un discurso histórico sobre el tema de la raza. ...El nos inspiró al recordarnos del potencial que se alberga en nuestra propia responsabilidad. Nos pidió que sobrepasáramos nuestro pasado racialmente dividido. ...

“Como hispano, sus palabras me conmovieron. Yo he estado muy preocupado por la demonización de los inmigrantes particularmente los hispan@s, por muchos en este país. Crímenes de odio en contra de los hispanos están en ascenso como resultado de esto y ahora, en tiempos de dificultades económicas, la gente busca a quien culpar y teme que la gente continuará explotando nuestras diferencias raciales y culpar a otros que no son como ellos. Nosotros sabemos quién tiene la culpa—las desastrosas políticas económicas de la administración de Bush.”

Estas declaraciones fueron hechas dentro del marco de elecciones burguesas y por un político pro capitalista y que además excusa al sistema capitalista y sus consecuencias.

Sin embargo, hasta cierto punto es refrascante e importante el escuchar esto en la televisión nacional.

L@s inmigrantes han sido de hecho, víctimas de una campaña de demonización hostil y racista. Cada día, cada minuto, l@s latin@s y otr@s inmigrantes de color están siendo atacad@s de maneras incontables. No es sorprendente por lo tanto que incluso una figura latina del establecimiento tal como Richardson, que es mexicano-americano, diga la verdad.

El Southern Poverty Law Center, (SPLC siglas en inglés)—[Centro Legal de la Pobreza en el Sur]es un centro que brinda protección legal a víctimas de agresión racial, además de ayudar en la enseñanza

de tolerancia racial y también mantiene vigilancia de los grupos racistas que están brotando en todo el país, recientemente publicó su reporte anual “El Año en Odio” en el cual documenta que el número de grupos de odio en el país se ha elevado en un 48 por ciento, a 888 grupos.

El SPLC afirma: “Este incremento de la actividad de odio está siendo estimulado por la fea retórica de los demagogos que utilizan a los inmigrantes como chivos expiatorios para los problemas de nuestro país.”

Los crímenes en contra de l@s latin@s ascendió en un 35%, según reportes del FBI, notó el SPLC. “Los expertos creen que tales crímenes son cometidos típicamente por gente que creen que están atacando a inmigrantes,” continuó el reporte.

En los últimos tres años, unos 300 grupos anti inmigrantes se han activado.

Quién es verdadero culpable del odio anti inmigrante?

¿Qué significa la declaración de Bill Richardson y la de Barack Obama sobre la inmigración? Querrá decir que el Partido Demócrata ha dado una vuelta fundamental para ahora hablar la verdad sobre la situación de los inmigrantes? ¿Querrá decir que la campaña derechista liderada por racistas como los republicanos Tom Tancredo, Lou Dobbs, los Minutemen y otros ha sido detenida?

¿Querrá decir que si el Partido Demócrata gana en noviembre los ataques contra inmigrantes y el pueblo trabajador terminarán?

Desafortunadamente, mientras que Bill Richardson dijo la verdad, y es un paso adelante que opiniones progresistas sobre inmigrantes sean transmitidas nacionalmente por la televisión, tiene sin embargo, unas limitaciones serias y profundas.

El Partido Demócrata en si no puede cambiar su política en una forma que resultará en un cambio fundamental para l@s inmigrantes o la gente trabajadora en general. Sí se pueden alcanzar algunas victorias, por supuesto. Pero tales resultados son producto principalmente de lucha y no descienden desde Washington.

Uno solo tiene que observar cómo la facción de Clinton en el Partido Demócrata, que hasta ahora ha sido la facción domi-

nante, está tratando con la cuestión del racismo en la campaña presidencial. Sin duda alguna, detrás del escenario, los Clinton están promoviendo y utilizando al racismo como un arma para satisfacer sus aspiraciones presidenciales.

“Cuando todo fracase, utilice el racismo”, es probable que se digan el uno a la otra en la casa. En un artículo publicado en ‘Counterpunch’ el 24 de marzo, Jeffrey St. Clair nos recuerda que la administración de Bill Clinton llevó a cabo unos de los ataques más duros en contra de la gente de color en tiempos recientes.

Escribe St. Clair, “Bill Clinton lanzó su campaña electoral supervisando personalmente la ejecución de Ricky Ray Rector, un joven negro con daños cerebrales. El condenó a la artista de rap, Sister Souljah, denunciando su música y sus opiniones políticas como peligrosas para las mentes jóvenes. Los Clinton renegaron de su antigua amiga, Lani Guinier ... y botaron a la Dra. Jocelyn Elders de su posición como Cirujana General”.

“Y así fue como trataron a gente conocida”, él enfatiza.

Además, no debemos olvidar que bajo la administración de Clinton uno de los peores ataques contra los pobres y la gente de color ocurrió: el desmantelamiento del sistema de asistencia social, una protección social que había sido ganada por medio de una lucha militante de l@s oprimid@s y l@s pobres.

Hillary Rodham Clinton no es el Presidente Bill Clinton, por supuesto, y el sexismo y la misoginia tienen que ser condenados cuandoquiera aparezcan, incluso si la víctima es una política capitalista. Pero Rodham Clinton nunca condenó tales ataques y está en record por el apoyo que ella prestó a la administración de Bill Clinton, incluso a favor del ahora muy impopular NAFTA.

El Partido Demócrata no ha cambiado. Tampoco va a cambiar porque es un partido que funciona para los empresarios y para la clase capitalista y que actúa para frenar las luchas independientes y cooptar cualquier idea o lucha progresista y confinarla al corral de la defensa del sistema capitalista.

Pero también es el partido cuya base es más representativa de la clase trabajadora que la del Partido Republicano. Tiene más gente de color, más sindicatos, más activistas opuestas a la guerra, etc.

Las declaraciones de Bill Richardson sobre la inmigración no reflejan un cambio a la izquierda del Partido Demócrata, sino reflejan lo que está pasando actualmente entre esa base popular.

La población de los EEUU no está en su mayoría aceptando la histeria antiinmigrante.

Más de una vez durante los debates presidenciales, cuando un candidato, no importa si era Kucinich, Obama o Edwards, hizo un comentario progresista sobre inmigrantes recibió muchos aplausos entusiastas del público. Encuesta tras encuesta muestra que la inmigración no es una gran preocupación de las masas, especialmente hoy en día.

Eso es importante.

Lo que hace falta es llevar este sentimiento de las masas y de otros sectores, y dirigirlo a la dirección correcta.

Bill Richardson dijo, “Todos nosotros sabemos que el verdadero culpable (de convertir a l@s inmigrantes en chivos expiatorios) es la política económica desastrosa de la administración de Bush!”

Eso no es toda la verdad. El culpado verdadero no es solamente la administración de Bush. Miren los hechos de la administración de Clinton. Miren la manera en que el Partido Demócrata ha tratado cada cuestión importante para las masas: los ataques sobre la vivienda y el empleo, el debate sobre inmigración, la guerra en Irak, entre otras. No ha sido presentada ninguna solución para un cambio fundamental.

El verdadero culpable no es la administración de Bush sino el propio sistema capitalista, que históricamente se ha aprovechado de la mano de obra inmigrante cuando la ha necesitado. Cuando la economía está funcionando bien el sistema capitalista abraza a tod@s l@s inmigrantes, pero cuando la economía está en declive se convierten los inmigrantes en chivos expiatorios.

¿Una oportunidad o todo sigue igual?

Cuando Bill Richardson, un latino, se paró en el escenario con Barack Obama y habló contra el racismo, fue un paso hacia adelante para la lucha contra el racismo a pesar del hecho que los dos son proponentes de capitalismo. Fue un avance para la unidad negra y latina, aunque es un avance limitado.

Ocurrió un debate nacional sobre el racismo. Portavoces burgueses dijeron que Obama habló a las personas como “adultos”.

Muchas personas de color en este país debían haber sentido un poco de esperanza cuando representantes de los pueblos que han estado históricamente bajo ataque en este país llegaron a pararse en unidad en un escenario nacional aún por un momento y hablaron contra el racismo.

Este sentido de esperanza rápidamente se desvanecerá sin embargo si una sola cosa no ocurre.

Y esto es la lucha de las masas en las calles. Solo una lucha masiva puede verdaderamente avanzar los logros de acabar con el racismo, ganar los derechos de l@s inmigrantes, acabar con los procedimientos ejecutivos hipotecarios, y también terminar la guerra.

Obama y Richardson, aún en sus puestos prestigiosos, han sentido los efectos del racismo. Cada persona de color en este país lo ha sentido.

Con Obama y Richardson abiertamente hablando sobre las cuestiones de racismo y abogando por l@s inmigrantes, ¿es esta una oportunidad de avanzar la lucha?

¿Pueden comunistas conscientes de clase, revolucionari@s y progresistas independientes echar leña al fuego para cambiar este país desde abajo? ¿Pueden aprovechar el momento quitándose a los liberales pro-capitalistas y construir una lucha entre las masas tan fuerte, tan multinacional, tan grande y amplia, con tanta consciencia de clase que el centro de gravedad se traslade desde el podio de las elecciones a las calles de este país?

Creemos que sí. □

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- Trabajos y viviendas para tod@s, no más despidos y pérdidas de nuestros hogares.
- No a la Guerra en Irak.
- No a la deportación de Flor Crisóstomo; asilo político para Víctor Toro.
- Dinero para los diques de Nueva Orleans, no para el muro con México.
- Defendamos el derecho de la gente a regresar a Nueva Orleans.